

# THE BRITISH ELECTIONS

by

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## INTRODUCTION

ON May 30 the General Election will be held in Great Britain. The Conservative party, which under the leadership of the Right Honorable<sup>1</sup> Stanley Baldwin has held power since the General Election of 1924, will ask to be returned upon the basis of its record of the last four and one-half years. The Labour party, which during this time has been the official Opposition to the government, will, under the leadership of the Right Honorable J. Ramsay MacDonald, challenge the record of the Conservatives and seek the support of the country on a program of moderate socialism. Between these two parties are the Liberals, led by the Right Honorable David Lloyd George, who will attempt to convince the country that they are the desirable mean between the two extremes of die-hard Toryism on the one hand, and socialism on the other.

### PROSPECTS OF THE PARTIES

The coming election is of more than ordinary interest, both because of the importance of the issues before the electorate and because of the great uncertainty as to its outcome. In the first place more than five million new voters have been added to the electorate by the enfranchisement of young women between the ages of twenty-one and thirty years. How these so-called "flappers" will vote is a factor of unpredictable importance.

The outcome of the election is complicated further by the existence of three vigorous parties. With a three-cornered fight in most of the 615 constituencies in Great Britain, there is likely to be a great proportionate disparity between the popular vote for any political party and the seats won by that party. A relatively small change in the popular vote in many constituencies might substantially alter the Parliamentary strength of the parties.

At the last General Election, on October 29, 1924, the Conservative party swept the country, winning a clear majority of 211 seats in the House of Commons over the other two parties combined. The results of the election of 1924 were:<sup>2</sup>

|                     |     |
|---------------------|-----|
| Conservatives ..... | 413 |
| Labour .....        | 151 |
| Liberals .....      | 40  |
| Other parties ..... | 11  |

The accompanying map shows the geographical distribution of Parliamentary strength in the last General Election. It will be seen that with the exception of Northern Scotland and Northern Wales, which remained Liberal strongholds, and the industrial districts of Southern Wales and Glasgow, which went strongly Labour, the Conservatives won a majority of seats in every other part of the United Kingdom. The Labour Party was the runner-up to the Conservatives in all of the large cities and industrial areas.

Although the Conservative party won a clear majority of seats in the House of Commons, the combined popular vote of the Liberal and Labour parties was considerably larger than that of the Conservatives. The popular vote was:<sup>2a</sup>

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Conservatives .....                    | 7,861,402 |
| Labour .....                           | 5,487,649 |
| Liberals .....                         | 2,928,064 |
| Combined Liberal and Labour vote ..... | 8,415,713 |

Optimistic predictions of success are to-day being made by the leaders of all three parties. Unbiased observers are inclined to doubt, however, if any of the three parties will win a majority of seats in the House of Commons. If the recent by-elections are any guide to the results in the General Election, both Labour and the Liberals will gain

1. Honorable, any member of the House of Commons; Right Honorable, one who is or has been a member of the Cabinet.

2. *Dod's Parliamentary Companion*, 1928.  
2a. *Ibid.*

at the expense of the Conservatives. In the recent by-elections in five constituencies which have been held by the Conservatives since 1924, the Liberal party gained two seats, Labour one, and the Conservatives, with considerably reduced majorities, barely retained the other two. The betting on the London Stock Exchange for the first half of the month of April predicts the following results:

|                     |            |
|---------------------|------------|
| Conservatives ..... | 260 to 280 |
| Labour .....        | 240 to 260 |
| Liberals .....      | 50 to 65   |

Should neither the Conservative nor the Labour party win a majority of seats in the new Parliament, the resulting situation would differ from that which prevailed after the General Election of 1923 in no essential particular. In that election the Conservatives won 259 seats, Labour 191 and the Liberals 159. When the new Parliament met, the Liberals supported the Labour motion of "no confidence" in the Conservative government and the King sent for Mr. MacDonald who was asked to form a new government. If such a division of Parliamentary strength should result from the forthcoming elections, there would be two alternatives: either the Labour party would form a government with Liberal support, or the Conservative and Liberal parties would form a coalition with Labour in opposition.

#### THE POSITION OF THE LIBERALS

Although they have no chance of winning a majority of seats in the new Parliament, the position of the Liberal party is of the greatest importance, both in their effect on the vote of the other two parties, and, in case neither the Conservatives nor Labour win a clear majority, in determining which party they will put in power.

The most striking result of the last election from the point of view of party politics was the great decline in the Parliamentary strength of the Liberal party. Indeed, many people thought that the Liberal party had been dealt a deathblow and would pass out of existence entirely. The decline in the number of seats in the House of Commons held by the Liberal party since the General Election of 1906 is shown as follows:<sup>3</sup>

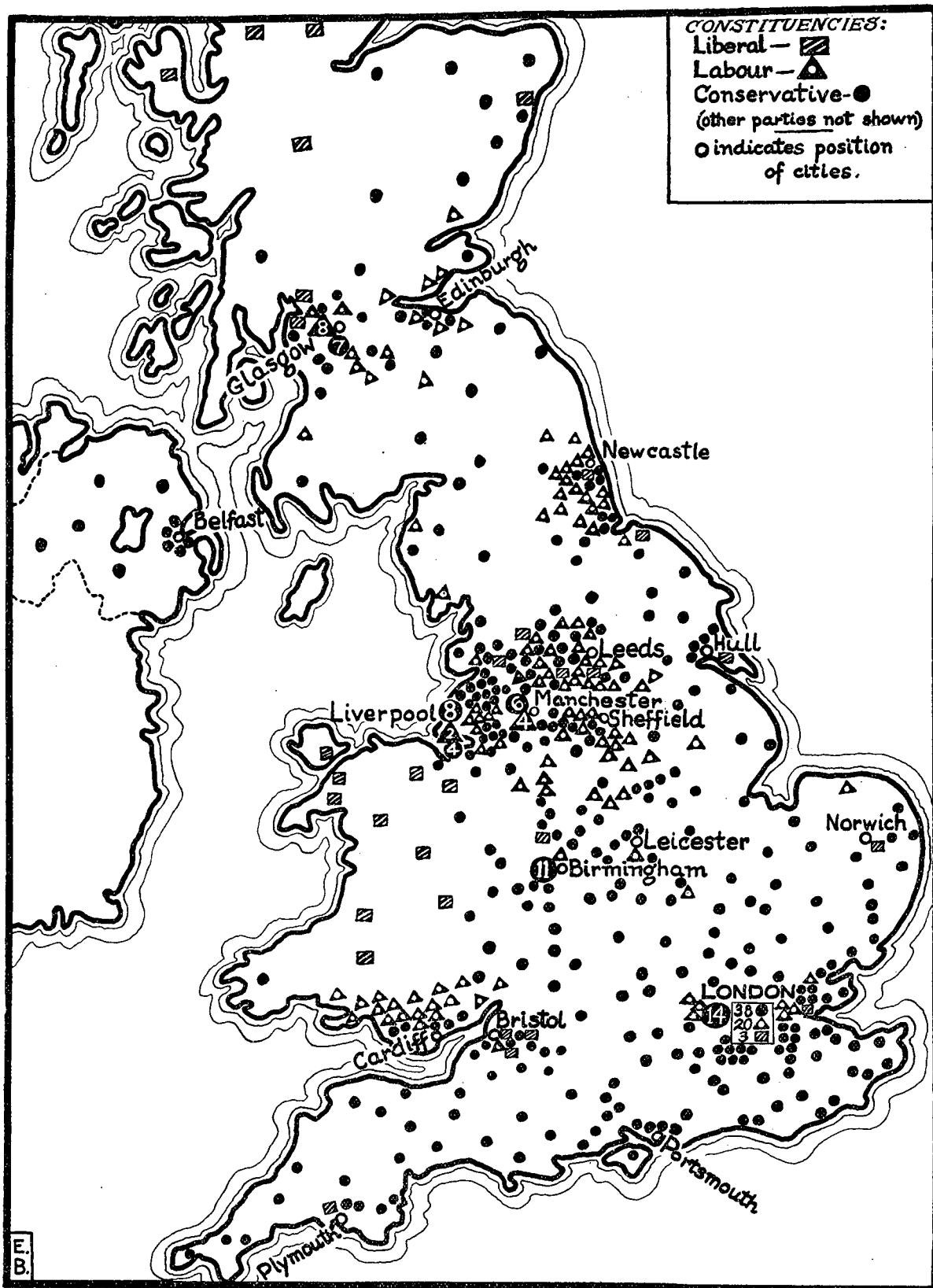
|                   |     |
|-------------------|-----|
| 1906 .....        | 376 |
| 1910 (Jan.) ..... | 275 |
| 1910 (Dec.) ..... | 270 |
| 1918 .....        | 165 |
| 1922 .....        | 114 |
| 1923 .....        | 159 |
| 1924 .....        | 40  |

In spite of this, the Liberals have entered the present campaign hoping to regain at least a part of their former prestige and power. With the aid of Lloyd George's famous "war chest,"<sup>4</sup> consisting of several hundred thousand pounds somewhat mysteriously acquired, the Liberals are contesting more than 500 out of the 615 constituencies. Moreover, they have presented to the country, through Mr. Lloyd George, a comprehensive plan for the solution of the problem of unemployment which is attracting widespread attention throughout the United Kingdom.

The Liberals have gained also by the defection from the government of several important newspapers. Mr. J. L. Garvin of *The Observer*—a powerful, independent Sunday newspaper with Conservative leanings, controlled by Viscount Astor—says, editorially, "This Government, like no Government we remember, is one that it is almost impossible to help." Lord Beaverbrook, who controls *The Sunday Express*, *The Daily Express* and *The Evening Standard*, has also deserted the Baldwin government in favor of the Liberals. Viscount Rothermere, who controls a number of English newspapers, including *The Daily Mail* and *The Evening News*, the former having the largest circulation of any newspaper in Great Britain, and who strongly supported the Conservatives at the last General Election, is now supporting the Liberal candidates with the same enthusiasm as he formerly evinced on behalf of the Conservatives. In a recent editorial he declared: "It is possible to keep the Socialists out without holding for the Government which has disappointed us all. The way to make a vote tell against socialism is not to give it to the Conservative candidate, but to give it to the Liberal."

3. *Constitutional Year Book*, 1928, p. 219.

4. The Lloyd George Fund was probably acquired by the "sale" of peerages. Cf. *Labour Year Book*, 1928, p. 224-241.



Prepared by the Foreign Policy Association

# DISTRIBUTION OF PARTY STRENGTH IN GENERAL ELECTION, 1924

## POLITICAL PERSONALITIES

## STANLEY BALDWIN

The present Prime Minister and leader of the Conservative party is the Right Honorable Stanley Baldwin. He was born in 1862, the son of Alfred Baldwin, a wealthy industrialist. Mr. Baldwin was educated at the famous English public school of Harrow, and at Trinity College, Cambridge. He contested unsuccessfully the constituency of Kidderminster in 1906, and in 1908 was elected to Parliament from the Bewdley division of Worcestershire, and since that time he has continued to represent the same constituency in the House of Commons. Mr. Baldwin was Financial Secretary of the Treasury in the coalition government from 1917 to 1921, and president of the Board of Trade in 1921-22. He became the Parliamentary leader of the Conservative party and Prime Minister for the first time in May 1923, when Mr. Bonar Law was forced to resign on account of ill-health.

There have been many contradictory attempts to sum up the character of the Prime Minister. According to one version he is a simple, artless man forced by the pressure of circumstance into the leadership of his party and the highest political office in Great Britain. To others the apparent artlessness and reluctance with which he assumes great political responsibilities is the outward pose of a master politician. Whatever may be the interpretation placed upon his political personality, both his friends and his enemies agree that he is a man of great fairness, kindness and honesty.

Other members of Mr. Baldwin's Cabinet are: Sir Austen Chamberlain (Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs), the Earl of Balfour (Lord President of the Council), Lord Cushendun (formerly Ronald McNeill, M.P., Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, succeeding Viscount Cecil, resigned), Winston Churchill (Chancellor of the Exchequer, head of the "Constitutionalist party" group which seceded from the Liberals), Sir William Joynson-Hicks (Secretary of State for Home Affairs), the Earl of Birkenhead (Secretary of State for India), Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister (president of the Board of Trade), L. C. M. S. Amery (Secretary of State for the Dominions and Colonies),

Lord Eustace Percy (president of the Board of Education), the Marquess of Salisbury (Lord Privy Seal, leader in the House of Lords), Viscount Cave (Lord Chancellor), Sir L. Worthington Evans (Secretary of State for War), Neville Chamberlain (Minister of Health), the Earl of Derby, the Duke of Devonshire, Baron Hardinge, the Duke of Northumberland and Sir Robert Horne (formerly Chancellor of the Exchequer).

## J. RAMSAY MacDONALD

The Parliamentary leader of the Labour party, and therefore the official leader of His Majesty's Opposition, is the Right Honorable James Ramsay MacDonald.<sup>5</sup> In contrast to the aristocratic origin of most of the members of the present government, Mr. MacDonald was born in the little fishing village of Lossiemouth, in Moryshire, Scotland, of obscure parentage. He received an elementary education at a "board" school near his home. After working as a laborer in the fields for some time, he became a pupil-teacher and looked forward to entering upon a scientific career. He went to London in 1885 and became a warehouse clerk, and studied and practiced journalism in his spare time. In 1894 he joined the new Labour party, and in the following year fought his first election as Labour candidate for Southampton. In 1899 he became secretary of the Labour Representation Committee, a position which he held until that body became the Labour party in 1906. He was elected to Parliament from Leicester in 1906 and was reelected at subsequent elections until 1918. During the war he was forced to resign as chairman of the Parliamentary Labour party because of his opposition to British participation in the war. In November 1922 he was returned to Parliament, this time from Aberavon, and was again elected leader of the Labour party. Mr. MacDonald was Prime Minister in the Labour government of 1923.

Other leaders of the Labour party are: Arthur Henderson (secretary of the National Labour party, formerly Secretary of State for Home Affairs), Philip Snowden

<sup>5</sup>. Iconoclast, J. Ramsay MacDonald, *The Man of Tomorrow*, 1924.



(formerly Chancellor of the Exchequer), J. R. Clynes, (deputy leader, formerly Lord President of the Council), J. H. Thomas (political general secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen, formerly Secretary of State for the Colonies), George Lansbury (chairman of the National Executive of the Labour party), Herbert Morrison (vice-chairman of the National Executive and party leader on the London County Council), T. Kennedy (chief Parliamentary whip), Sidney Webb (formerly president of the Board of Trade), John Wheatley, Noel Buxton, A. Susan Lawrence, Ellen Wilkinson, W. Adamson, Stephen Walsh, Thomas Shaw, Arthur Ponsonby, C. P. Trevelyan, Josiah Wedgwood, Lt. Commander J. M. Kenworthy, A. V. Alexander (Cooperative party), J. Maxton, Tom Johnston, Hugh Dalton, Oswald Mosley, Lord Parmoor, Earl Russell, Lord Thomson and Viscount Chelmsford.

#### DAVID LLOYD GEORGE

The Parliamentary leader of the Liberal party is the Right Honorable David Lloyd George. So much has been written about this astonishing man and his career, first as a fiery Welsh Radical and later as president of the Board of Trade, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Minister of Munitions, Secre-

tary of State for War, and finally as Prime Minister during and after the war, that it is necessary to mention only the simple facts of his life. He was born in Manchester in 1863, the son of a schoolmaster. He was educated privately and at Llanystymdwy Church School. He was admitted to the bar in 1884. Mr. Lloyd George became Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Cabinet of Mr. Herbert Asquith in 1908. In 1915 he was made Minister of Munitions and later Secretary of State for War. In 1916 he forced Mr. Asquith out of the Cabinet and became Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury. He continued to serve as Prime Minister at the head of a coalition government until the Conservatives withdrew their support in 1922.

Other leaders in the Liberal party are: Earl Grey of Falloden (formerly Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and leader of that wing of the Liberal party opposed to Lloyd George, which includes Sir Donald MacLean and Vivian Phillips), the Earl of Reading (formerly Viceroy of India), Sir Herbert Samuel (head of the party organization), Sir John A. Simon (deputy leader), Earl Beauchamp, Viscount Cowdray, Walter Runciman (leader of the radical group and H. A. L. Fisher.

### THE ECONOMIC SITUATION OF GREAT BRITAIN

Politics in Great Britain since the war have been dominated almost completely by the economic situation.

When the war ended and the short post-war boom was over, Great Britain found herself in an entirely different economic situation from that which existed prior to 1914. The volume of the world's commerce, which had increased at a very rapid rate before the war, remained for several years below the level of 1913. This was a heavy blow to British industry, which to a greater extent than that of any other nation is dependent for its prosperity upon foreign trade. Meanwhile Great Britain's merchant fleet had become 50 per cent larger than before the war although there was no corresponding increase in the volume of the world's sea-borne trade. The British coal industry, which throughout the nineteenth

century had furnished the basis for Great Britain's tremendous industrial and commercial expansion, was faced with a decreased demand and consequent disorganization. The growth of industrialization in the Far East and in the Dominions also decreased the demand for British goods. The rapid fall of prices from the high level of 1920 brought with it a corresponding reduction of wage rates and general business depression. The finance and currency situation was aggravated further by the early return to the gold standard.<sup>6</sup>

As a result of all these as well as many other factors, the great basic exporting industries of Great Britain suffered heavy losses. Coal, metallurgy and textiles were especially hard hit, and these in turn had

6. *Britain's Industrial Future: being the Report of the Liberal Industrial Inquiry, 1928.*

a profound effect upon all of British industry.

The decline in British export trade since the war is shown by the following index numbers:<sup>7</sup>

| <i>Total Foreign Trade</i> |      |       |       |
|----------------------------|------|-------|-------|
|                            | 1913 | 1924  | 1925  |
| Net Imports .....          | 100  | 106.6 | 111.8 |
| British Exports .....      | 100  | 76.1  | 76.0  |
| Re-exports .....           | 100  | 88.4  | 87.8  |

### THE UNEMPLOYMENT PROBLEM

The most difficult aspect of Great Britain's post-war maladjustment has been the

tremendous increase in unemployment. Since 1921 the number of unemployed workers in Great Britain has never fallen below one million, and for the greater part of the time has been well over this figure. This would be an alarmingly high proportion of unemployment even in the trough of a transitory depression, but in Great Britain unemployment has stood at this figure for the last seven years and the situation shows few signs of improvement. The percentage of unemployed among insured workpeople in Great Britain and Northern Ireland from 1922 to 1928 inclusive is shown in the following table:<sup>8</sup>

#### PERCENTAGE OF INSURED WORKMEN UNEMPLOYED

| <i>End of</i>   | 1922<br><i>per cent</i> | 1923<br><i>per cent</i> | 1924<br><i>per cent</i> | 1925<br><i>per cent</i> | 1926<br><i>per cent</i> | 1927<br><i>per cent</i> | 1928<br><i>per cent</i> |
|-----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| January .....   | 16.2                    | 12.7                    | 11.9                    | 11.5                    | 11.0                    | 12.1                    | 10.7                    |
| February .....  | 15.7                    | 11.8                    | 10.7                    | 11.3                    | 10.4                    | 10.9                    | 10.4                    |
| March .....     | 14.6                    | 11.1                    | 9.9                     | 11.1                    | 9.8                     | 9.9                     | 9.5                     |
| April .....     | 14.4                    | 10.9                    | 9.7                     | 10.9                    | 9.1                     | 9.4                     | 9.5                     |
| May .....       | 13.5                    | 10.7                    | 9.5                     | 10.9                    | *14.3                   | 8.8                     | 9.8                     |
| June .....      | 12.7                    | 11.3                    | 9.4                     | 11.9                    | *14.6                   | 8.9                     | 10.7                    |
| July .....      | 12.3                    | 11.5                    | 9.9                     | 11.2                    | *14.4                   | 9.2                     | 11.6                    |
| August .....    | 12.0                    | 11.8                    | 10.6                    | 12.1                    | *14.0                   | 9.3                     | 11.6                    |
| September ..... | 11.9                    | 11.7                    | 10.8                    | 12.0                    | *13.7                   | 9.3                     | 11.4                    |
| October .....   | 12.0                    | 11.7                    | 11.1                    | 11.4                    | *13.6                   | 9.5                     | 11.8                    |
| November .....  | 12.4                    | 11.5                    | 11.0                    | 11.0                    | *13.5                   | 10.0                    | 12.2                    |
| December .....  | 12.2                    | 10.7                    | 10.9                    | 10.4                    | *11.9                   | 9.8                     | 11.2                    |

\*Excluding workpeople in the coal-mining industry who were disqualified for unemployment benefit owing to the dispute.

The monthly figures of unemployed workers for 1928 is shown in the following table:<sup>9</sup>

|                         |           |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| December 19, 1927 ..... | 1,127,000 |
| January 30, 1928 .....  | 1,199,000 |
| February 27 .....       | 1,139,000 |
| April 2 .....           | 1,071,000 |
| April 30 .....          | 1,171,000 |
| May 21 .....            | 1,143,000 |
| June 25 .....           | 1,239,000 |
| July 30 .....           | 1,354,000 |
| August 27 .....         | 1,367,000 |
| October 1 .....         | 1,384,000 |
| October 29 .....        | 1,421,000 |
| November 26 .....       | 1,439,000 |
| December 17 .....       | 1,312,000 |

The unemployed in Great Britain have been kept alive by means of unemployment insurance. The insurance fund is made up of a three-fold contribution, by employed

workers, employers and the State. The number of workers insured under the Unemployment Insurance Act is about twelve million. The indemnities to the unemployed paid out under the terms of the act are fifteen shillings per week per man and twelve shillings per week per woman (about \$3.60 and \$2.88), with an addition, if the beneficiary is married, of five shillings for the husband or wife and one shilling for each child (about \$1.20 and \$.24). In addition to unemployment insurance is the help the unemployed workers receive under the Poor Law. This law is administered under the municipal governments through special commissions, called the Boards of Guardians in England and Wales, and the Parish Committees in Scotland. Being administered under local government there is thus a lack of uniformity in the donations. As a general rule, the local authorities double the fifteen or twenty shillings that the unemployed receive from their insurance, bring-

7. *Britain's Industrial Future*, p. 22. Compiled from the Report of the Committee on Industry and Trade, Survey of Overseas Markets, and from Board of Trade Journal. The Irish Free State is included as a part of the United Kingdom in the preparation of the foregoing table.

8. *The Economist*, "Commercial History of 1928," February 9, 1929.

9. *Ibid.*

ing the total up to forty or fifty shillings (about \$10 or \$11 a week).

By means of this help the unemployed workers can exist almost indefinitely. The cost of unemployment insurance and Poor Law Relief, however, is tremendous and the Insurance Fund and the Poor Relief Fund have so overtaxed their own resources that they have been forced to borrow heavily from the National Treasury. What Great Britain has paid for the relief of unemployment is equivalent to a large war indemnity. In spite of its tremendous cost, however, there are few in Great Britain who would abandon unemployment insurance. Although regretting the circumstances that make it

necessary, Conservatives, Liberals, and Labour unite in the belief that unemployment insurance is a necessary means of ameliorating the distress of the unemployed. Without the help furnished by Unemployment Insurance and Poor Relief Funds, according to many observers, the unemployed would become completely demoralized and would perhaps turn to revolution as a way out of their difficulties.

The economic situation resulted in serious labor disputes culminating in the general strike of May 1926. In the last two years, however, relations between employers and the employed have materially improved.

### OUTSTANDING ISSUES IN THE ELECTION

There are two outstanding issues before the people of Great Britain in the forthcoming elections, unemployment and foreign policy. By far the most important of these, from the point of view of the great masses of the people, is that of unemployment. The intensity of interest in this problem can be gauged by the fact that Mr. Lloyd George has made it the basis of his dramatic appeal for the return to power of the Liberal party. In an address to Liberal candidates setting forth the program of the Liberal party on March 1, 1929, Mr. Lloyd George declared:

"If the nation entrusts the Liberal Party at the next General Election with the responsibilities of Government, we are ready with schemes of work which we can put immediately into operation, work of a kind which is not merely useful in itself but essential to the well-being of the nation. The work put in hand will reduce the terrible figures of the workless in the course of a single year to normal proportions, and will, when completed, enrich the nation and equip it for competing successfully with all its rivals in the business of the world. These plans will not add one penny to national or local taxation.

"It will require a great and sustained effort to redeem this pledge, but some of us sitting at this table have succeeded in putting through even greater and more difficult tasks in the interests of the nation."<sup>10</sup>

#### "WE CAN CONQUER UNEMPLOYMENT"

The details of the plan whereby Mr. Lloyd George and the Liberal party would solve the problem of unemployment are set forth

in a booklet of some sixty pages under the title, "We Can Conquer Unemployment." The essence of the plan is an extensive program of public works. By building necessary roads and bridges, providing more adequate housing, developing the telephonic and electrical equipment of the nation and improving and constructing canals, Mr. Lloyd George proposes to reduce the number of unemployed by as much as 750,000 in the first year.

All of these projects will be financed by borrowing money on the security of the State. The basis of Mr. Lloyd George's claim that these plans "will not add one penny to national or local taxation" is summed up as follows:<sup>11</sup>

"We have certain expenditure on telephone, electrical and transport developments which, over a due period, can be justified as an ordinary commercial proposition. Some slight assistance in the way of reduced interest may be required in the first two or three years but this can be recouped later. We have certain road expenditure offering no direct financial return, though a large indirect return in savings to the nation in cost of transport and otherwise.

"But to meet the interest and sinking fund on the loan to finance this, we have a steady increase in receipts from motor vehicle taxation year by year, which increase alone at the present level of taxation, together with receipts from betterment, is likely to be sufficient to meet interest and repay the whole State expenditure within a comparatively short period of years. All this work, therefore, makes no drain on the Exchequer. In the housing work there is an increased annual charge for subsidy; but this is

10. *We Can Conquer Unemployment*, p. 4.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 60.

well within the limits envisaged by Parliament in 1924 as a proper charge from a housing as distinct from an unemployment point of view. Finally there is the cost of land drainage. This will be contributed to by the landowner to the extent to which benefit has accrued to specific land, but a large part of the cost must fall upon the State, particularly in the case of schemes of arterial drainage. This last is the only new net additional charge upon the Exchequer.

"Against this is to be set:

"(1) a direct saving to the Unemployment Benefit Fund of many millions of pounds. . . .

"(2) an increase in receipts from existing taxation of some £10,000,000 to £12,000,000 per annum."

### LABOUR AND UNEMPLOYMENT

On the question of unemployment the program of the Labour party is very similar to that of the Liberals, except that it is more cautious in its claims. On April 18, 1929 Mr. J. R. Clynes, a prominent Parliamentary leader of the Labour party and a member of the Labour government in 1924, announced the details of his party's program on unemployment in the House of Commons. The program includes national enterprises, such as road-building, drainage and reclamation, as included in the Liberal party plan, but it does not include the Lloyd George pledge to solve the problem within a year nor his proposal to borrow in order to finance the scheme.

In addition to national undertakings and public works, the Labour party program includes various other features. The renewal of diplomatic relations with Russia as a step toward restoring trade with that country is put foremost as a measure of improving the unemployment situation. The Labour party also demands a seven-hour day in the coal mines, instead of the present eight hours as fixed by law by the Conservative government. It would enact legislation for government control of coal mines, and would make a levy on the royalties of the present owners to help provide a pension fund for aged miners. The MacDonald government, if returned to power, would attempt to relieve the pressure of numbers in the labor market by increasing the compulsory school age and retiring old workers on pensions.

The Labour party promises to appoint a commission to consider means of reconstruction in the cotton industry. It also proposes to promote more extensive settlement in the Dominions.

While the Labour and Liberal parties are competing with one another in proposing solutions for the unemployment problem, Mr. Baldwin and the Conservative party are pursuing the even tenor of their ways. In outlining the program of the Conservative party, Mr. Baldwin said:<sup>12</sup>

"We shall continue the process now going on, that of conquering unemployment. The partners in industry, the masters and the men, have been getting together. We are recovering in the world our competitive power, our trade is definitely improving, and, provided that no cataclysm of any kind in the way of a sudden reversal or an alteration in the industrial policy of this country occurs, that progress will be maintained and unemployment will continue to fall."

Mr. Baldwin pledged himself and his party to the continuance of the policy of safeguarding industries and to the relief of British industry through decreasing taxes. With regard to specific measures for the relief of unemployment, he said:

"Now what are we doing to help industry and to get men and women into permanent employment? We are trying by arrangements with the Dominion governments to make it easier for them to go to the Dominions overseas. We are trying by transference to get men from the 'black spots' into districts where they can get work.

"We have given a great deal of attention to juveniles and we have so progressed with juvenile unemployment centers that practically every boy in these depressed areas, if he wishes, can go to an unemployment center and can, through that, be passed, if his parents consent, into an industry in some other part of the country. But the most grievous lot is that of the man, not skilled, who is thrown out of work owing to the reorganization and rationalization which is going on. We have met that difficulty by forming training centers in which a man undergoes intensive training for some months which fits him for many kinds of work into which he has been drafted and great numbers have met with success already. That policy we shall continue as the demand for it arises, and we are from time to time, where they are most needed, opening such centers for these men. For industry itself we felt strongly that some form of assistance must be given."

<sup>12</sup>. For full text of Mr. Baldwin's speech, cf. *Christian Science Monitor*, April 22, 1929



FOREIGN  
AFFAIRS

The other issues of outstanding importance in the forthcoming election are concerned with foreign policy, particularly British relations with the United States. The failure of the British Government to reach a naval limitations agreement with the United States at the Geneva Naval Conference of June 1927 and the abortive Anglo-French Accord which Sir Austen Chamberlain announced to the House of Commons on July 30, 1928, has caused an outburst of criticism of the present government. Sir Austen Chamberlain has been further criticized for what his opponents declare is an excessive friendship for France as well as for a reluctance to face frankly the issue of sea power and sea law with the United States. The government has also been attacked for insisting upon reservations to the Anti-War Pact.

The general program of the Labour party, adopted by the Party Conference in 1928, declared for:<sup>13</sup>

1. The renunciation by international treaty of the use of war as an instrument of national policy, and the negotiation through the League of Nations of international agreements.
2. The reduction of armaments by international agreement, to the minimum required for police purposes.
3. The immediate signature of the Optional Clause, and the consequent acceptance of the jurisdiction of the Permanent Court of International Justice in all justiciable disputes.
4. The promotion of international economic co-operation, as recommended by the International Economic Conference of 1927, and

cordial cooperation with the International Labour Office.

5. The establishment of the fullest possible publicity with regard to international relations and policy, and the submission of all international engagements to the House of Commons.
6. The systematic use of the League of Nations to promote the utmost possible measure of co-operation between the nations of the world.

The revocation of the British reservations to the Kellogg pact, the withdrawal of all foreign troops from the Rhineland, the conclusion of an agreement with the United States regarding the freedom of the seas, and the recognition of Russia are other international policies which are being supported by the Labour party.

Although the Liberals are concentrating most of their attention on the industrial situation and the relief of unemployment, they have been no less vigorous than the Labour party in their criticism of the foreign policies of the Conservative government. Through Mr. Lloyd George they have gone on record against the spirit of the Anglo-French Accord and in favor of naval limitation with the United States.

The impending election may have been one of the factors in the approval by the Cabinet on April 24 of the recent American proposals as presented at Geneva by Hugh S. Gibson. Sir Austen Chamberlain, speaking in the House of Commons said:

"His Majesty's Government, equally with the Government of the United States, desire not merely the limitation but the reduction of naval armaments. We had indeed ourselves made proposals for such reduction and that it should be applied to every class of war vessel."

## POLITICAL PARTIES IN GREAT BRITAIN

For more than two hundred years prior to the war Great Britain was divided politically into two parties; the Conservative, Tory or Unionist party on the one hand, and the Whig, Radical or Liberal party on the other. During all of this time one or the other of these two parties was in power while the other made up the official Opposition. Although various minor parties, such as the Irish Nationalists, attempted from time to time to break up this two-party system, they were forced to cooperate with one

or the other of the older parties and for all practical purposes were absorbed by them. The following record of the Parliamentary majorities at the General Elections in Great Britain from the Reform Bill of 1832 to the time of Great Britain's entrance into the war shows the varying fortunes of the two historic parties.<sup>14</sup>

14. The number of seats in the House of Commons has varied. With the Union of Great Britain and Ireland (1802), the number of members of the House was fixed at 658. This number was adhered to by the Reform Act of 1832. In 1885 the total was increased to 670, and by the act of 1918 to 707. With the creation of the Irish Free State in 1922, the Irish representation was reduced to 13 members from Northern Ireland, making the membership of the House of Commons 615. *Dod's Parliamentary Companion*, 1929.

13. The Labour Party, *Labour and the Nation*, 1928.

### MAJORITY OF SEATS IN HOUSE OF COMMONS

|                           |     |
|---------------------------|-----|
| 1832 Liberal .....        | 370 |
| 1835 Liberal .....        | 112 |
| 1837 Liberal .....        | 18  |
| 1841 Conservative .....   | 76  |
| 1847 Liberal .....        | 18  |
| 1852 Conservative .....   | 20  |
| 1857 Liberal .....        | 80  |
| 1859 Liberal .....        | 50  |
| 1865 Liberal .....        | 78  |
| 1868 Liberal .....        | 116 |
| 1874 Conservative .....   | 98  |
| 1880 Liberal .....        | 115 |
| 1885 Liberal .....        | 86  |
| 1886 Conservative .....   | 114 |
| 1892 Liberal .....        | 40  |
| 1895 Conservative .....   | 152 |
| 1900 Conservative .....   | 134 |
| 1906 Liberal .....        | 356 |
| 1910 (Jan.) Liberal ..... | 124 |
| (Dec.) Liberal .....      | 126 |

### BREAK-UP OF TWO-PARTY SYSTEM

The most important development in British politics since the war has been the break-up of the two-party system.

When Great Britain entered the war in 1914 the Liberal party was in power. Under the leadership of Mr. Herbert Asquith, later Lord of Oxford and Asquith, they had enjoyed the uninterrupted confidence of the electorate since the General Election of 1906. In the years immediately preceding the war, however, the Liberals had been forced to rely more and more upon the support of the rising Labour party and the Irish Nationalists. The House of Commons elected in December 1910 contained 274 Conservatives, 270 Liberals, 42 Labour and 84 Irish Nationalists. When the war came there developed considerable dissension both within the Cabinet and in the membership of the party in Parliament. Many Liberals and members of the Labour party who before had supported the Liberal government became frankly pacifist. It was necessary, therefore, for Mr. Asquith in May 1915 to alter the character of his Ministry by drawing into it the leaders of the Conservative, Labour and Irish Nationalist parties. The coalition government thus established lasted throughout the war and until the General Election of 1922.

The orthodox Liberals and Mr. Asquith, however, were soon forced out of the coali-

tion government. With the help of the Conservative leader, Mr. Bonar Law, Lloyd George succeeded in November 1916 in turning Mr. Asquith out of power. Great bitterness arose among the orthodox Liberals against this new leader who they felt had violated the traditional rules of Parliamentary loyalty by betraying his party chief. As a result, many Liberals withdrew their support from the coalition government, and it was forced to rely more and more upon the Conservative party for its support.

Immediately after the Armistice Lloyd George took advantage of the disorganization of his political enemies and the great popular elation over the victory to hold an election. In his program he pledged himself and the coalition government to "make the Huns pay and to hang the Kaiser." This proved to be a popular slogan and the coalition government won 485, or a majority of 263, seats in the House of Commons. The coalition majority was made up of 333 Conservatives, 133 Liberals and 13 members of the Labour party. The Opposition to the coalition government was made up of 48 Conservatives, 28 Asquith Liberals and 57 members of the Labour party. In the Cabinet as reconstituted in January 1919 the Labour party was no longer represented because it had withdrawn its support.

The coalition government remained in power until October 19, 1922, when the Conservative party, at a reunion at the Carlton Club, decided to withdraw their support from Mr. Lloyd George. Mr. Bonar Law formed a new Conservative government and appealed to the country. The result of the elections of November 15, 1922 was a sweeping victory for the Conservative party which received a majority over all other parties of 79 seats in the House of Commons. The most striking feature of the election was the break-up of the Liberal party and the rise of the Labour party to the position of the second party in the House, and therefore the official Opposition to the government. The members elected were classified as follows:

|                                       |     |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| Conservatives .....                   | 344 |
| Labour .....                          | 142 |
| Independent Liberals .....            | 60  |
| National Liberals <sup>15</sup> ..... | 57  |

<sup>15</sup>. The National Liberals are the followers of Lloyd George.

The Conservative government which was elected in November 1922 was expected to last out the Constitutional period of five years. The Prime Minister, Mr. Bonar Law, was forced to resign, however, in May 1923 on account of ill-health and Mr. Stanley Baldwin succeeded him. Confronted by acute unemployment and widespread industrial depression, Mr. Baldwin decided to try a protective tariff as a means of solving some of the disabilities under which Great Britain was suffering. It is a tradition of British politics that when a Ministry adopts any marked reversal in policy, for which it holds no mandate from the people, it should present the issue to the voters before attempting to carry the new proposal through Parliament. In obedience to this tradition, a General Election was held in November 1923. As a result of this election, the Conservative majority was wiped out, but it still remained the leading party in the House of Commons. The vote was:

|                     |     |
|---------------------|-----|
| Conservatives ..... | 259 |
| Labour .....        | 191 |
| Liberals .....      | 159 |

On the question, therefore, of protection, the issue upon which Mr. Baldwin had appealed to the country, the Conservative party had been repudiated. Mr. Baldwin thereupon resigned, and the King sent for Mr. Ramsay MacDonald as the leader of the Opposition, who with Liberal support became Prime Minister and formed the first Labour government in the history of Great Britain.

The Labour government which assumed the responsibilities of office in January

1924 had no independent majority with which to carry out their own program of government. They were forced to depend upon Liberal support for their tenure of office. The party therefore abandoned the capital levy and other Socialist measures and concentrated their attention on foreign policy. They extended recognition to the Soviet Government. At the London Conference of July 16, 1924, they accepted the Dawes report and acted as intermediary between France and Belgium on the one hand, and Germany on the other in getting an agreement for the evacuation of the Ruhr.

The specific issue which led to the downfall of Great Britain's first Labour government was not one of national importance. The acting editor of an obscure Communist paper was charged with inciting the soldiers to mutiny. By action of the Labour Attorney General, Sir Patrick Hastings, the prosecution which had been started was dropped. When the House of Commons passed a vote asking an inquiry into the case, Mr. MacDonald, who had previously served notice that he would treat the vote on the resolution as one of confidence, or no confidence, resigned and called for a new election. In the election which was held in November 1924 the Conservatives swept the country. The newly elected House of Commons was made up as follows:

|                     |     |
|---------------------|-----|
| Conservatives ..... | 413 |
| Liberals .....      | 40  |
| Labour .....        | 151 |
| Minor parties ..... | 11  |

## THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

The influence of the Conservative party is not confined strictly to any class or geographical area. The strength of the old Tory party of the nineteenth century was largely recruited from the landed nobility, the farmers and the farm laborers, the Established Church and such other vested interests as the brewers and distillers. Although the Conservative party still maintains a large influence over these groups, it has in recent years broadened its support to include the industrial classes, white-

collared workers and large masses of the laboring population.

The power of the Conservative party is based upon its stalwart defense of the existing social order, and its opposition to socialism and revolutionary doctrines of whatever nature. It stands for the defense of the British Constitution and the preservation of the economic order. It is opposed to innovations based on theoretic or idealistic purposes as distinct from reforms based upon inherited and tried institutions.

Its attitude toward change is summed up by Burke's statement: "I would not exclude alteration neither; but even when I changed, it should be to preserve."

The natural conservatism of mind upon which the Conservative party is based is set forth by one of its distinguished followers:<sup>16</sup>

"Natural conservatism is a tendency of the human mind. It is a disposition averse from change; and it springs partly from a distrust of the unknown and a corresponding reliance on experience rather than on theoretic reasoning; partly from a faculty in men to adapt themselves to their surroundings so that what is familiar merely because of its familiarity becomes more acceptable or more tolerable than what is unfamiliar. . . . Novelties, at the first sight, are regarded as new-fangled and either futile or dangerous by the great majority of men. They frighten and irritate, they fatigue and perplex those who for the first time seek to understand them. Human nature shrinks from them and is wearied by them. . . . And change is not only fearful, it is tiring. As men try to perceive and judge a new plan, the effort tires and overtasks their powers. The faculties of judgment and discernment ache within them. Why depart from the known which is safe to the unknown which may be dangerous? None would be so mad as to run the risk without much search and scrutiny. And this means perplexity, effort, confusion of mind, weariness. Why not

let it alone? Why be weary instead of at rest? Why rush into danger instead of staying in safety? 'I was well,' says the often-quoted epitaph of an Italian tomb; 'I would be better; I am here.'"

There is today little difference in the social philosophy of the left wing of the Conservative party and the right wing of the Liberals. Many of the great social reforms of the nineteenth century were carried out by Conservative governments. Disraeli is, in fact, still regarded as a radical by many of the Tories of the old school, but his influence and the traditions associated with his name are at present one of the most powerful influences in the Conservative party and they are fond of quoting him in their election pamphlets:<sup>17</sup>

"In a progressive country, change is constant; and the great question is, not whether you should resist change which is inevitable, but whether that change should be carried out in deference to the manners, the customs, the laws, and the tradition of the people, or whether it should be carried out in deference to abstract principles, and arbitrary and general doctrines."

This tradition was refreshed by the addition to the party of the "Liberal Unionists" headed by Joseph Chamberlain at the close of the last century.

## THE LABOUR PARTY

One of the dramatic features of British post-war politics has been the remarkable growth of the Labour party. Although they received only 370,802 votes and 42 seats in the elections in 1910, they were able in 1922 to win more than 4,200,000 votes and 142 seats, thus becoming the official Opposition. In 1923 they increased the number of their seats in the House of Commons to 191 and for nine months were entrusted with the responsibility of government.

The following table shows the rise to power of the Labour party:<sup>18</sup>

LABOUR'S ELECTORAL PROGRESS

| General Election  | Seats Contested | Members Returned | Labour Vote |
|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------|
| 1900 .....        | 15              | 2                | 62,698      |
| 1906 .....        | 50              | 29               | 323,195     |
| 1910 (Jan.) ..... | 78              | 40               | 505,690     |
| 1910 (Dec.) ..... | 56              | 42               | 370,802     |
| 1918 .....        | 361             | 57               | 2,244,945   |
| 1922 .....        | 414             | 142              | 4,236,733   |
| 1923 .....        | 427             | 191              | 4,348,379   |
| 1924 .....        | 514             | 151              | 5,487,620   |

The Labour party is a federation of the Trade Unions, the Trade Councils, the local party organizations, the Independent Labour party, the Fabian Society, and a number of other professional, cooperative and Socialist societies. The trade union membership constitutes the main rank and

16. Lord Hugh Cecil, *Conservatism*, p. 10-11.

17. National Union of Conservative and Unionist Associations, *What the Conservative Government has done for Women and Children, 1925-1928*.

18. Keith Hutchison, *Labour in Politics*, p. 115.



file of the party as well as its chief financial support. In 1926, out of a total membership in the Labour party of 3,388,286, there were 3,352,347 trade unionists.<sup>19</sup>

There have been Labour representatives in the House of Commons since 1874, but for all practical purposes they have been merely the left wing of the Liberal party. The first independent Labour member of Parliament was Keir Hardie, who in 1892 stood for West Ham and won. In the following years the Independent Labour party was organized under Hardie's leadership.<sup>20</sup> In 1899 they secured the cooperation of the Trade Union Congress for "establishing a distinct Labour group in Parliament," and organized under the name of the Labour Representative Committee with J. Ramsay MacDonald as secretary. In the General Election of 1900 the new party contested 15 seats and won 2, polling a total vote of more than 62,000. In 1906 the labor group became known as the "Labour party," and in the elections of that year won 29 seats and received a popular vote of more than 323,000.

The period immediately preceding the war was a difficult one for the Labour party. Although they won 42 seats in the elections of 1910 they were again forced by Parliamentary circumstances to become more or less an adjunct to the Liberal party. With the Liberals and Conservatives holding an approximately equal number of seats in the House of Commons, the Labour party held the balance of power. By voting for or against the government they could turn it out of power, but they had no chance of forming an alternative government. If they put the Liberal government out, they would be putting the Conservatives in. The Labour party was thus tied to the support of the Liberals.

During the war, the Labour party ceased to function as a separate political unit. Although several of its more prominent leaders—including Mr. MacDonald, Phil-

ip Snowden and Keir Hardie—opposed British policy in the war, the rank and file of the party as well as most of its leaders supported the coalition government, and two of its leaders actually entered the government. Ten days after the Armistice, however, the Labour party withdrew its support from the coalition, and reverted to its independent political status.

The socialism of the Labour party differs radically from the doctrinaire socialism of the continent. Like all other English institutions it has a distinct British flavor. It is almost entirely unconcerned with and unaware of socialist theory. Its socialism is pragmatic. Its purpose is to promote the interests of the working classes and by strictly constitutional means to work toward the ideal of industrial democracy. The objects of the Labour party as set forth in their party constitution are as follows:<sup>21</sup>

To secure for the producers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry, and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible, upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry or service.

Generally to promote the Political, Social, and Economic Emancipation of the People, and more particularly of those who depend directly upon their own exertions by hand or by brain for the means of life.

To co-operate with the Labour and Socialist organisations in the Dominions and Dependencies with a view to promoting the purposes of the Party and to take common action for the promotion of a higher standard of social and economic life for the working population of the respective countries.

To co-operate with the Labour and Socialist organisations in other countries, and to assist in organising a Federation of Nations for the maintenance of Freedom and Peace, for the establishment of suitable machinery for the adjustment and settlement of International Disputes by Conciliation or Judicial Arbitration, and for such International Legislation as may be practicable.

19. *Labour Year Book, 1928*, p. 20.

20. Keith Hutchison, *Labour in Politics*, p. 62-67.

21. The Labour Party, *Labour and the Nation*. From the Party Constitution, 1918.

## THE LIBERAL PARTY

The Liberal party, although reduced to only 40 seats in the House of Commons by the election of 1924, is nevertheless still a powerful force in British politics. A distinguished foreign observer<sup>22</sup> of British institutions states the position of the Liberal party:

"In its present form the Liberal Party is in the position of a great empire which has been reduced to the status of a second-rate power. It has lost its territories, its voters, and its strength, but it has retained its leaders who previously were accustomed to rule whole states, its general staff, its organization and party machine, its press, its intellectual schools, and finally a certain amount of its immense prestige. No matter what may be its present insignificant position, we must not lose sight of the fact that Liberalism, as a system of thought, is still fairly powerful, not only in those circles which can be officially classed as Liberal, but also throughout all classes of British society. There is still as in the past a Liberal point of view on all religious, economic, governmental and, above all, foreign questions."

Perhaps the greatest source of strength of the Liberal party is its distinguished leadership. Included in the party are such remarkable and diverse personalities as David Lloyd George, Sir Herbert Samuel, Sir John A. Simon, Walter Runciman, H. A. L. Fisher, Earl Grey of Falloden, the Earl of Reading, Sir Donald MacLean and Vivian Phillips on the political side, and such brilliant intellectual leaders as J. M. Keynes, Walter T. Layton, Ramsay Muir, L. T. Hobhouse, Philip Guedalla, D. H. Robertson and Sir Josiah Stamp.

The second important asset of the Liberal party is its powerful and influential newspaper support headed by *The Manchester Guardian*. Among other newspapers in Great Britain which are supporting the Liberal party, at least for the purposes of this election, are: *The Observer* (Sunday), *The Sunday Express*, *The Daily Express*, the powerful *Daily Mail* and *The Evening News*.

Although the Liberal party still stands staunchly for the principle of free trade—the issue upon which they first won the confidence of the electorate after the passage of the great Reform Bill of 1832—they have been forced to modify somewhat

their traditional devotion to the doctrine of *laissez faire*. A vigorous statement of the principles for which the Liberal party of today stands is given in the report of the Liberal Industrial Inquiry.<sup>23</sup>

"When it is asked how far it is the business of the State to attempt to set things right, we hold that the answer cannot be given in a phrase or a sentence. We are not with those who say that, whatever may be our present difficulties, the intervention of the State would only increase them. Nor do we share the views of the dwindling band who think that the right course is to hand over to the State the maximum of productive activity and industrial control. We have no love for State intervention in itself. On the contrary, we attach the greatest importance to the initiative of individuals and to their opportunity to back their opinion against that of the majority and to prove themselves right. But the methods of production have been subject of late to great changes. The theory that private competition, unregulated and unaided, will work out, with certainty, to the greatest advantage of the community is found by experience to be far from the truth. The scope of useful intervention by the whole Society, whether by constructive action of its own or by regulating or assisting private action, is seen to be much larger than was formerly supposed. . . .

"Liberalism stands for Liberty; but it is an error to think that a policy of liberty must be always negative, that the State can help liberty only by abstaining from action, that invariably men are freest when their Government does least. Withdraw the police from the streets of the towns, and you will, it is true, cease to interfere with the liberty of the criminal, but the law-abiding citizens will soon find that they are less free than before. Abolish compulsory education: the child, and perhaps his parent, will no longer be forced to do what they may perhaps not wish to do; but the adults of the next generation will be denied the power to read, to think, to succeed, which is essential to a real freedom. Repeal, to take one more example, the Shops Acts: short-sighted shopkeepers will be allowed to trade for longer hours, but other shopkeepers and the whole class of shop-assistants will be robbed of their proper share of the leisure without which life is a servitude. Often more law may mean more liberty. . . .

"...the Socialist is inclined to welcome extensions of State activity for their own sakes; he regards them all as stages on the road to an ideal which he cherishes. But the fact that

22. Siegfried, André. *Post-War Britain*, 1924, p. 262.

23. *Britain's Industrial Future: being the Report of the Liberal Industrial Inquiry*, 1928.

we do not share his ideal, and do not favour particular measures merely because they might be steps towards it, is no reason why, out of prejudice, we should close our eyes to whatever merits those measures may possess in themselves. If no one had ever generalised about Socialism, or used the word, or made it the rallying cry for a party, these measures might have been universally welcomed. It would be folly to reject what is right because some would have it lead to what is wrong.

"We refuse therefore to spend time or energy over the controversy between Individualism and Socialism, which has raged so long and with so lavish an expenditure of breath and ink and

temper. While the controversialists have exhausted themselves in struggling for theoretical objectives, work-a-day industry and political practice have moved far away from that issue; if it ever were a real issue, it is certainly now obsolete. To us those stalwarts of controversy seem to resemble the two knights in the story, who engaged in deadly combat in order to determine whether the shield which hung from a tree between them was gold or silver, only to discover that in fact it was gold on one side and silver on the other. Or perhaps it would be truer to say that they resemble two armies, each equipped with obsolete maps, and battling fiercely for the possession of fortifications which have long since been razed to the ground."

### CONCLUSION

In this report an attempt has been made to present in broad outline the outstanding factors in the forthcoming General Election in Great Britain. Space does not permit a more detailed review of the issues involved in what promises to be one of the most interesting and significant elections in post-war Britain. The electoral campaign is just beginning as this *Information Service* goes to press and it would be folly to attempt to predict what issues will develop as the campaign progresses.

Great Britain has not yet adjusted herself to the three-party system and one of the results of the present election will be

to determine whether Great Britain will continue with three political parties or revert to the two-party system. If the Liberal party makes substantial gains, as seems probable at the moment, the three-party system is likely to continue indefinitely. It is also probable in the event of a large Liberal gain that no party will win a majority of seats in the House of Commons and therefore two of the parties will be forced into an alliance or at least temporary cooperation. In that event whatever government is formed will exist by sufferance of the minor party and we may look forward to another election in the near future.

### APPENDIX THE RECORD OF THE CONSERVATIVES

The Conservative party is appealing to the country on the basis of its record while in office. Probably the most important of the Conservative measures have been:

1. The Trade Disputes and Trade Unions Act which was passed in 1927, Section I of which declared that "any strike having any object other than or in addition to the furtherance of a trade dispute within the trade or industry in which the strikers are engaged is illegal if it is designed or calculated to coerce the Government, either directly or by inflicting hardship upon the community."

This act contains a number of other provisions which are considered by organized labor and the Labour party to be detrimental to their interests. The Labour party is unalterably opposed to this act and promises to repeal it if returned to power.

2. A scheme of Rating Reform, popularly known as "de-rating," which was presented in the 1928 budget. This act proposes:

(a) As from October, 1929, all factories and property used for productive purposes should

be relieved of three-quarters of the local rates;

(b) Agricultural land and buildings which already enjoy relief to the extent of three-quarters of the rates should be relieved of all rates;

(c) Railway companies, canal, harbor and dock companies should also be relieved of three-quarters of their rates on condition that this relief is passed on in the form of reduced freights on certain products. In the case of the railway companies, the total relief will be approximately £4,000,000. One-fifth of this sum will go in relief of agricultural freights, while the other four-fifths will be used for the reduction of freights on coal, coke and patent fuel, mining timber, ironstone, iron ore, manganese and limestone for blast furnaces and steelworks;

(d) The whole of the amounts involved in the remission of rates should be transferred to the taxpayer, so that none of it will fall upon the ordinary ratepayer. (This will mean the State paying bigger grants to the local authorities, in order to make good the loss of rates);

(e) There shall be a new system of distribution of Exchequer grants to local authorities so as to make the burden fall more equally than at present upon one area as compared with another, and upon one industry as compared with another;

(f) The grants from the State to the local authorities should be still further increased so that there may be some reduction of rates for the ordinary ratepayer in the majority of areas in the country, and a big measure of relief to the ratepayer in the areas which are most highly rated today;

(g) In order to raise the necessary money a tax of 4d. per gallon should be imposed on foreign imported light oils. These consist mainly of petrol and the taxation will for the most part fall upon the motor-user.

The scheme cannot be brought into complete operation until October, 1929, because it is necessary to pass two bills through Parliament, and it is also necessary to re-value the properties which are to be relieved from rates, an operation which will take at least twelve months to carry out.

3. An act passed in 1928 giving women the Parliamentary and Local Government Franchise on the same terms as men. This adds to the electorate 5,250,000 women between the ages of 21 and 30.

In addition to these, other important Conservative measures are:

(a) A new measure for safeguarding industries was established in 1925. Duties have been imposed on imported lace, embroidery, cutlery, leather gloves, fabric gloves, gas mantles, wrapping paper, china, tableware and buttons. In most cases the duty is 33-1/3 per cent. Empire produce pays two-thirds of the full rates.

(b) The number of government officials has been reduced by 7,000. Government expenditures have been reduced.

(c) Up to April, 1928, 100 juvenile unemployment centers had been established in the areas of 43 local educational authorities. The Unemployment Insurance Act (1927) gives the Minister of Labour power to make grants out of the Unemployment Fund towards the expenses

of courses of instruction for persons of 16-18 years of age. A National Advisory Council for Juvenile Unemployment has been set up.

(d) The Conservative government has encouraged in a number of ways emigration and settlement in the Dominions.

(e) The Conservative government in 1926 passed the Small Holdings and Allotments Act, providing facilities for the acquisition of small holdings by people of small means. Under this act, the agricultural worker is assisted to own his own cottage and a small piece of land.

(f) An average of more than £616,000 a year has been provided by the government for agricultural education and research.

(g) The British Sugar Act, 1925, provides for a subsidy in respect of home-grown beet for ten years.

(h) The Conservative government has continued to subsidize the building of houses and has enacted legislation continuing the Rent Restriction Acts which protect the poorer sections of the community from being charged excessive rents during the period of housing shortage.

(i) The government has cooperated with local authorities in reconditioning houses in the slum areas.

(j) The Conservative government enacted the Widows', Orphans' and Old Age Contributory Pensions Act.

(k) The government passed the Legitimacy Act of 1926 enabling children born out of wedlock to be legitimized by the subsequent marriage of the parents.

(l) The Electrical Supply Act was passed in 1926. Its purpose is to bring about the co-ordination and standardization of electricity undertakings so that the electrical industry will be organized on a national as opposed to a local scale.

(m) In the 1929 budget the tax on tea which has existed since the time of Queen Elizabeth was repealed. This will decrease the price of tea by 4d. a pound.

## THE GENERAL PROGRAM OF THE LABOUR PARTY

The general program of the Labour party which was authorized at the conference of the party in 1928 is summarized briefly as follows:<sup>25</sup>

### I. INDUSTRIAL LEGISLATION

1. The Repeal of the Trade Unions Act and the Restoration of Trade Union Rights.
2. The establishment of a 48-hour week.
3. The improvement and extension of Factory Acts, Mines Regulation Acts, Minimum Wage Acts, and other industrial legislation.

### II. UNEMPLOYMENT<sup>26</sup>

### III. THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRY AND TRADE

1. The establishment of a National Economic Committee to advise the Government as to economic policy, and of a National Development and Employment Board to prepare schemes for the development of national resources.
2. The transference to public ownership of the coal, transport, power, and life insurance industries.
3. The relief of industry by the readjustment of

the relations between national and local finance and by the taxation of land values.

4. The more stringent control of Banking and Credit, and their closer adaptation to the needs of industry.
5. The protection of the consumer against exploitation and the extension of the powers of the Food Council.
6. The establishment of the fullest possible publicity with regard to costs and profits.
7. The promotion of scientific research, with a view to the improvement of industrial technique.
8. The extension of the powers of the Economic Section of the League of Nations.

### IV. AGRICULTURE AND RURAL LIFE

1. The transference of land to public ownership.
2. The establishment of security of tenure for efficient farmers.
3. The provision of credit on easy terms.
4. The stabilization of prices by the collective purchase of imported grain and meat.
5. The elimination of waste by the development of collective marketing.

<sup>25</sup>. The Labour Party, *Labour and the Nation*.

<sup>26</sup>. Cf. p. 92, for unemployment program of the Labour party.



6. The establishment of efficient services of electrical power and transport in rural areas.
7. The protection of the agricultural worker by the effective enforcement of an adequate minimum wage and of reasonable hours of labor.
8. The improvement of the services of health, housing and education in rural districts.
9. The provision of facilities for the acquisition of land, and of an adequate supply of untied cottages.

#### V. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOCIAL SERVICES

1. The passage of legislation to enable the larger local authorities to undertake such services as their citizens may desire, subject to due safeguards in respect of efficiency and capital expenditure.
2. The provision of an adequate supply of houses at rents within the means of the workers, the establishment of cottage homes for the aged, and the prevention of profiteering in land and building materials.
3. Slum clearance and the extension of town and regional planning.
4. The provision of medical care before and after child-birth, and the extension and improvement of the school medical service.
5. The amendment of the Health Insurance Acts, and the extension of insurance, including additional medical benefits, to the dependents of insured workers and to sections of the population at present outside its scope.
6. The improvement of pensions for the aged and of the allowances provided for widows and orphans.
7. The break-up of the Poor Law.

#### VI. EDUCATION AND THE CARE OF CHILDHOOD

1. The creation of a democratic system of education, adequately financed, free from the taint of class distinctions, and organized as a continuous whole from the Nursery School to the University.
2. The fullest possible provision for the physical well-being of children, by the establishment of the necessary number of Nursery Schools, open-air schools and special schools for defective children, by the extension of school meals and by the further development of the school medical service.
3. The adequate staffing of Primary Schools and the drastic reduction in the size of classes.
4. The improvement of school buildings and the provision of books, equipment and amenities on a generous scale.
5. The regrading of education in such a way as to secure primary education for all children up to 11, and secondary education, of varying types, for all children above that age.
6. The extension of the school-leaving age to 15, with the necessary provision of maintenance allowances.
7. The establishment of easy access to Universities

and to other places of higher education, and the provision of adequate financial assistance for them.

#### VII. FINANCIAL POLICY

1. The progressive reduction of expenditure on armaments.
2. The abolition of taxes upon the necessities of life and of protective duties.
3. The increase of the death duties upon large estates.
4. The further graduation of the income tax so as to relieve the smaller, and increase the contribution from the larger, incomes.
5. The establishment of an additional graduated surtax on incomes from property of over £500 per annum.
6. The taxation of land values.

#### VIII. INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND COOPERATION<sup>27</sup>

#### IX. THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH OF NATIONS

1. The establishment of the closest possible relationship between Great Britain and the Dominions.
2. The recognition of the right of the Indian people to self-government, and the admission of India to the British Commonwealth of Nations on an equal footing with the self-governing Dominions.
3. The establishment of safeguards against the exploitation of indigenous peoples by European capital, the prevention of forced labor and of injurious or inequitable conditions of employment, the protection of such peoples in the occupation of their land and in the exercise of civic rights, and the development among them of the services of health and education.
4. The strengthening and extension of the authority of the Mandates Commission of the League of Nations.
5. The development, in cooperation with the other States composing it, of the economic resources of the British Commonwealth of Nations, and the establishment of machinery for the advice and supervision of intending emigrants.

#### X. POLITICAL DEMOCRACY

1. The maintenance of the unquestioned supremacy of the House of Commons.
2. Uncompromising resistance to the establishment of a second chamber with authority over finance and power to hamper the House of Commons and defeat democratic decisions.
3. The abolition of plural voting.
4. Drastic legislation against corrupt practices at elections, and the abolition of practices which confer special political advantages upon wealth.
5. The establishment of complete publicity with regard to party funds, and the termination of the practice of selling so-called honors.
6. The creation of separate legislative assemblies in Scotland, Wales and England, with autonomous powers in matters of local concern.

## THE GENERAL PROGRAM OF THE LIBERAL PARTY

The general program of the Liberal party is to be found in the booklet, "We Can Conquer Unemployment,"<sup>28</sup> and in "Britain's Industrial Future," a report of the Liberal Industrial Inquiry. The latter, a volume of some five hundred pages, is one of the most remarkable documents that has ever been published by a political party. It is an exhaustive analysis of the economic condition of Great Britain. While the report has never been officially adopted by the Liberal party, it represents the intellectual efforts of the leaders of that party. It is impossible to make a complete summary of the Liberal proposals here. Some of the outstanding points in the program are:

1. Drastic proposals are made for securing the effective publicity of accounts in the case of all public companies. Large public companies controlling more than 50 per cent of a product within Great Britain should be registered as a public corporation and should be subject to stringent provisions of publicity.

2. A Board of National Investment should be established to have charge of all capital resources accruing in the hands of the government.

3. An Economic General Staff should be established to cooperate with the Prime Minister and the Cabinet on economic policy.

4. Comprehensive proposals are made for improving the economic and statistical information of the government.

5. Consent and open discussion and voluntary arbitration are advocated in industrial disputes. They advocate a legally enforceable minimum wage by industries, family allowances and the wide extension of suitable forms of profit sharing.

6. The establishment in every industry of a representative regulating body, including both employers and workers, for the consideration of common interests, and endowed with the power of obtaining, under proper safeguards, legal sanction for their agreements.

7. Special safeguards should be taken against interruptions in the essential public services, provided, however, "that the ultimate right to strike or to lock out should not be impaired."

8. It is necessary to create machinery of organized cooperation in the individual factory and workshop.

9. Elaborate suggestions are made for imperial development through encouraging emigration, supplying capital, opening up markets and developing communications.

10. "It is essential to national efficiency that there should be a great improvement in the arrangements by which boys and girls are placed in industry and trained for their life careers."

11. The formal constitution of the Bank of England should be modified to emphasize its character as a national institution.

(a) Dividends to the shareholders of the bank should be fixed permanently at their present figure.

(b) The Court of Directors should be reduced in size, and the method of appointment and qualifications of directors reconsidered.

(c) The term of office of the Governor should be fixed at five years, renewable for a further five years.

(d) Cooperation between the Treasury and the Bank of England should be expressly provided for in the inner management of the Bank.

12. The currency note issue and the Bank of England note issue should be amalgamated on a revised basis. There should be greater publicity throughout the whole field of finance.

13. A reform of the national accounts is necessary for intelligent criticism by the House of Commons and to secure economy.

14. Expenditure of the War Department should be reduced. Educational and social expenditure should be more wisely used.

15. The rating system should be reformed as follows:

(a) The relief of the able-bodied poor should be transferred from local authorities to the State and coordinated with the existing machinery for administering unemployment insurance.

(b) A substantial part of the expenditure on roads which is at present borne by local authorities should be transferred to an augmented road fund.

(c) The present system of grants-in-aid, which is in many respects highly advantageous, should be extended.

In addition to the above, other reforms in the rating system advocated by the Liberals are:

(a) An alleviation of the burden imposed by the present system of rating might be obtained by the rating of site values.

(b) A reform long overdue is the reorganization of rating areas.

(c) So far as practicable, it is desirable to concentrate relief on industrial, agricultural, and business lands and premises, and on working-class dwellings. With this end in view, the possibility of differentiating the administration from the social services should be considered, with separate administrative and social rates, and graduation of the latter in accordance with some test of capacity to pay.

<sup>28</sup>. For Liberal unemployment program, cf. p. 91 of this Information Service report.